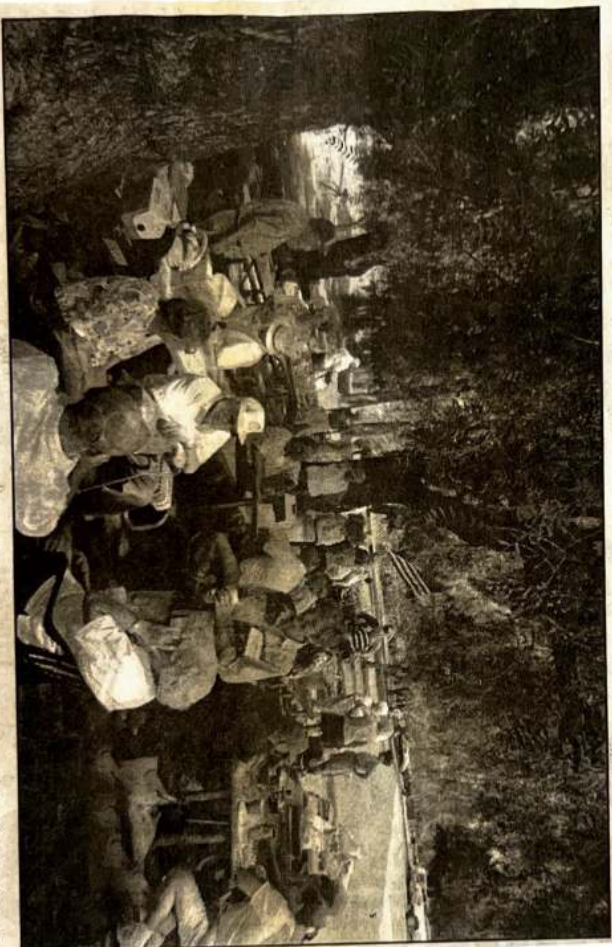


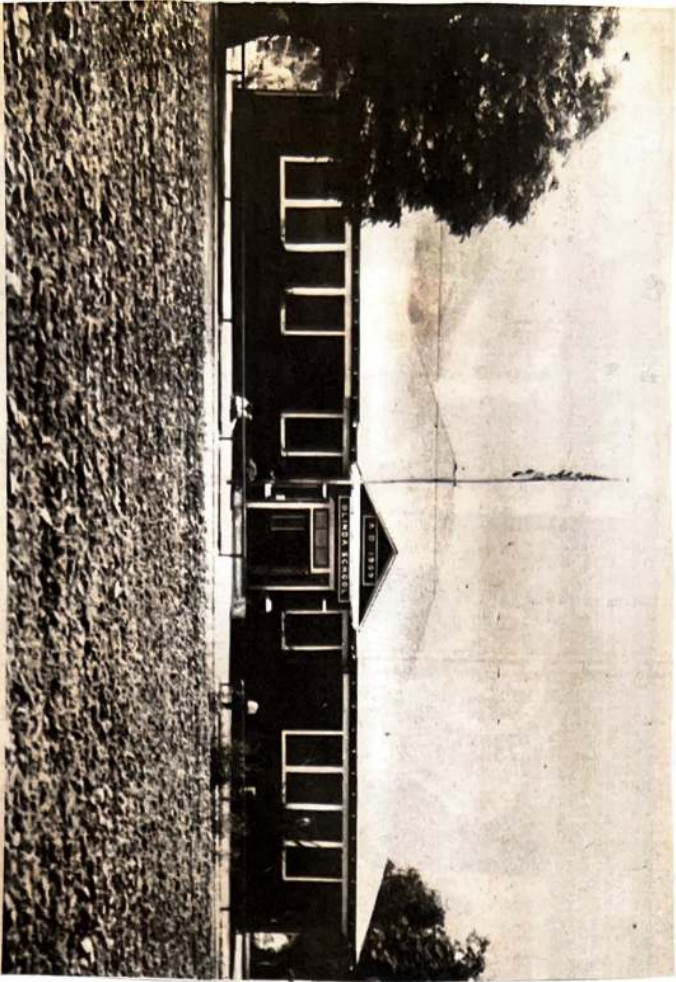
Brea Progress September 4, 1937

## DAY WITHOUT LABOR



Stan Bird/Brea Progress  
A reunion of old-time Breaans at the Olinnda Old Timers annual picnic at Carbon Canyon Park livened up this year's Labor Day weekend. In Brea last weekend, people relaxed, watched football, took stock of local and world events and reviewed the summer as they began turning their thoughts toward autumn.

# Olinda schoolmates ring in 90 years of fond memories



An historical photo shows the plowed field that graced the front of the 1909 Olinda School building

"Olinda had a lovely, little bell tower, and in the morning, Mrs. Cooper or the janitor, Mrs. Junker, pulled the bell to warn us to get busy... She would play a victrola record and we would march in; as nearly as I can remember it was Sousa's 'Stars and Stripes Forever'..."  
— From "Olinda Remembered"

**By Barbara A. Williams**  
DSP Correspondent

The victrola is gone from Olinda School, but the old school bell is still there, hanging as a silent reminder of 90 years of learning, friendship, pranks and pride.

But those who shared in the history of the Carbon Canyon school don't need the bell to ring in memories of skunk-doused youngsters or impromptu school picnics. Pals of laughter trigger stories that reflect years of devotion to children and community.

"Those were wonderful times; everybody knew everybody," recalled former school secretary Jimmy Tannehill, amid merry reminiscing with Homer and Betty Farmer.

"The kids called me Mrs. T at first, but that changed to Grandma T before I left," recalled Jimmy as she giggled with her Olinda chums through stories of massive pot-luck dinners, playground rattlesnakes and school bus service for birthday parties.

"The children... I loved them all. We all did, didn't we?" she sighed, as the threesome lapsed into quiet reverie.

But the laughter bubbled up again as Jimmy remembered how Olinda was called "the country club school" because of its tennis court, and Homer retold stories of "town kids" brushes with Olinda's poison oak, snakes and lizards.

Betty took her turn, saluting bus driver Vern Neal, who waited patiently for his passengers — and then taught them manual training at the school,

where he also served as general repairman.

Beloved teachers elicited smiles as well. The trio remembered Principal Gladys Keeler ("She was a character!"), taking the students on sunny-day jaunts in the little school bus, and teacher Becky Martin ("a real Mother Earth") cooking up a storm in the school kitchen for "everybody and anybody."

Jimmy's remembrances reached back to son Buzz's school days and his eighth-grade graduation in a class with eight other boys and one girl in 1964.

But the Farren family memories stretched back even further. Betty, born and raised in Olinda, recalled graduating from Olinda in a class of 25, and choosing Brea over Fullerton district schools for her high-school studies. Homer said his parents attended Olinda School in its earliest years. He was an Olinda School District trustee and stated proudly that he signed the eighth-grade graduation diplomas for four of his five children.

Together, the three friends reconstructed the school's history, from its first "little red schoolhouse" in the boomtown days of Olinda oilfields, to the merger of the Olinda and Brea school districts in 1966.

Their conversation, matched with the school's historical records, revealed that the first Olinda School opened its doors in 1898, so that the children of oilfield workers would no longer have to take six-mile rides in horse-drawn wagons to the

nearest schools. The Olinda School District was formed the same year and flourished on monies brought in by the prosperous oilfields.

In 1909, the "little green schoolhouse" was built on land donated by the Shell Oil Co. to accommodate a growing enrollment. The population in the oilfields reached 10,000 and school attendance soared to 300.

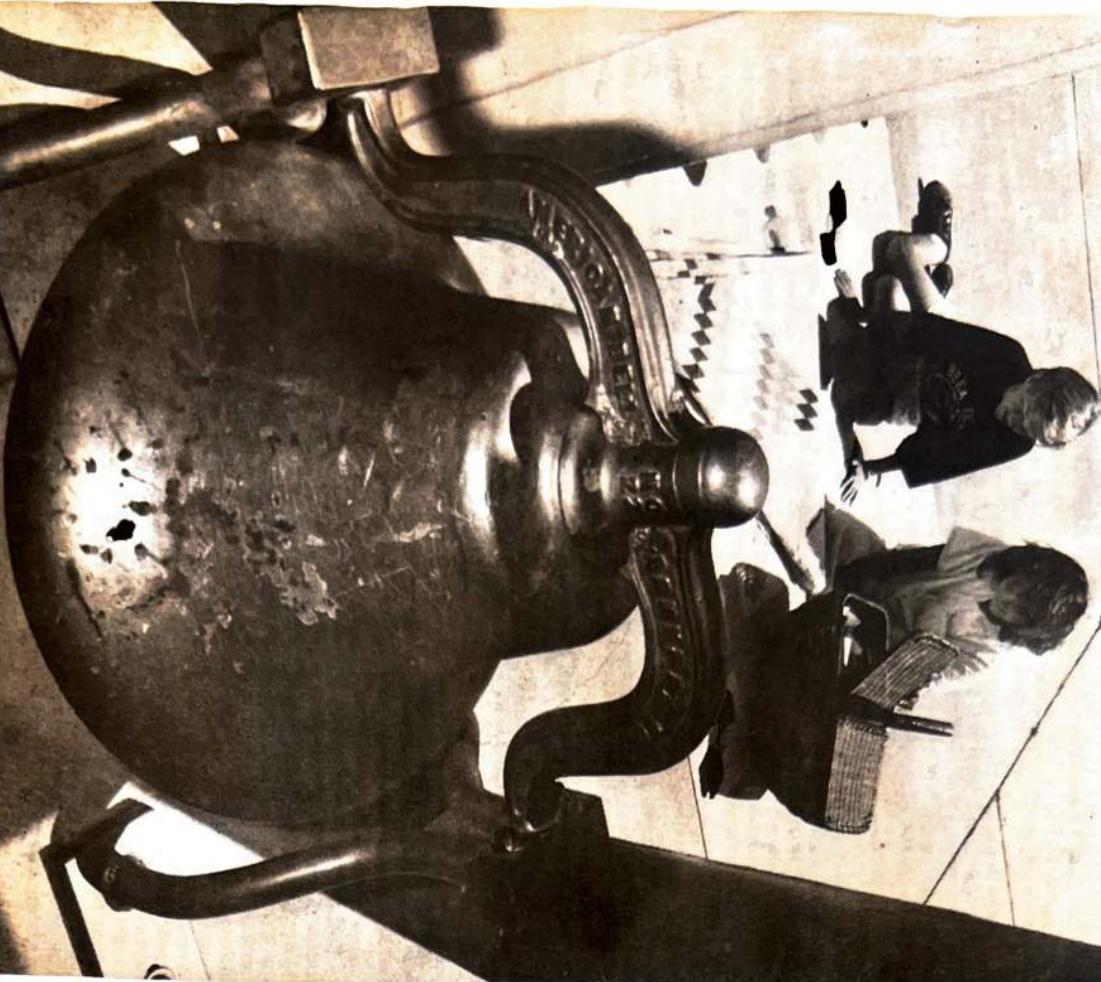
Homer said. But then the Depression hit, oilfield workers were laid off and families moved away.

Only 22 children attended Olinda School in 1959, when the Brea Dam construction brought the school site to an end. The little green schoolhouse closed its doors in 1962 with a graduating class of 10. The school children were moved to temporary quarters down Carbon Canyon Road at El Rodeo Riding Club while another school was built in Olinda Village, a new development of 200 residential homes.

The Brea school district had already expressed an interest in Olinda's small enrollment and oilfield monies, and wanted to unify with Olinda School District, Homer said. At the time, Olinda boasted only 19 registered voters, he noted, so the Olinda School Board decided to "leave it all as is" until the new

homes were built and the owners could help make the decision.

In 1964, the new school in Olinda Village opened and in December 1965, the Olinda School District was voted into the Brea school district. The last eighth-grade class graduated



**PICNIC TIME**—David Alexander and Laura Cleverger, fifth-grade students at Olinda School in Brea, set up a makeshift picnic beside the original school bell installed in 1909 at Olinda School. Alumni will gather Saturday for the 90th anniversary picnic.



Betty and Homer Farrer, left, share the old times with Jimmy Tannehill in anticipation of the Olinda reunion.

from Olinda in 1966, and the Brea-Olinda Unified School District began operation July 1, 1966.

Today, Olinda's seventh- and eighth-graders come to town to attend Brea Junior High. But for a reminder of Olinda, they need only look toward Arovista Park. The soon-to-be-demolished Scout House once was a part of Olinda School. So was the Brea Senior Center on Stevers Street near the edge of the park.

"We sold part of the green schoolhouse to the city for \$50," Homer said of the Senior Center building that was once used as a recreation and dance hall for Brea youth.

"It was built in 1909 and you'd think it would be junk. The Army Corps of Engineers argued that it would be just full of termites. But the county inspector checked that old building and found not one termite. The entire building was white cedar and redwood. So they cut it in two and moved it to town."

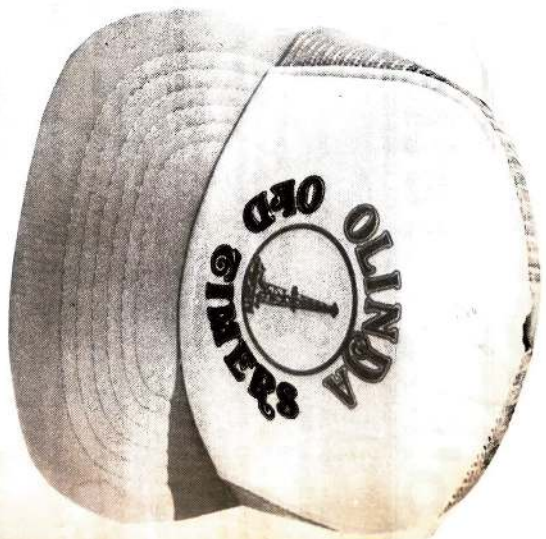
Both the Farrers and Jimmy moved to town, too. Betty and Homer recently celebrated their 45th anniversary at their Laurel Avenue home, and Jimmy manages the Breal apartments on Orange Avenue. When she wants to resurrect some Olinda memories, she visits her old friend Becky Martin at Martin's Mariposa School classroom.

"The children call me Grandma T.," she said with a smile.



**MANY MEMORIES** — Former residents, their friends and relatives gathered together on Sunday to relive old memories of their lives on the Olinda oil leases during the 12th Annual Olinda Old Timers Picnic. More than 120 people attended the

picnic staged in Carbon Canyon Regional Park where many of the Olinda homes once stood. Eight people actually born in the town attended festivities.



# Natives of Olinda gather once more to relive old memories



**REMEMBERING WHEN** — Elia Armstrong Post and her brother, Milton Armstrong, display a scrapbook of memories from the small oil town of Olinde which once existed where Carbon Canyon Regional Park is now located. Post and Armstrong were two of more than 120 attendees at Sunday's

12th Annual Olinde Old Timers Picnic. A memorial to their brother, aviator Jack Armstrong, stands just to the left of the couple. The Armstrong family lived in the area of Carbon Canyon Park where the picnic was held. Trees planted by their father still shade this picnic area. (More photos on page 9).

(Star-Progress photo by Brian H. Green)



**THE OLD BALL GAME** — Midge (Armstrong) Slenko, right, passes out Cracker Jacks to Murle (Finley) McConville, left, and her brother, Farrell Finley, during the Olinda Old Timers Picnic last Sunday. The 12th annual event in Carbon Canyon Regional Park paid tribute to the baseball players who once represented the oil companies they played for during the turn of the century. The most famous Olinda resident was Hall of Fame pitcher Walter Johnson, who went on to win 424 major league baseball games for the Washington Senators.



**LONG AGO RESIDENT** — Etta Osborn Farley, age 101½, left, came to Olinda in 1924 and was a neighbor of Milton Armstrong, right. Armstrong managed to coax a smile out of Farley, whom he's known since she first moved to the oil lease homes.



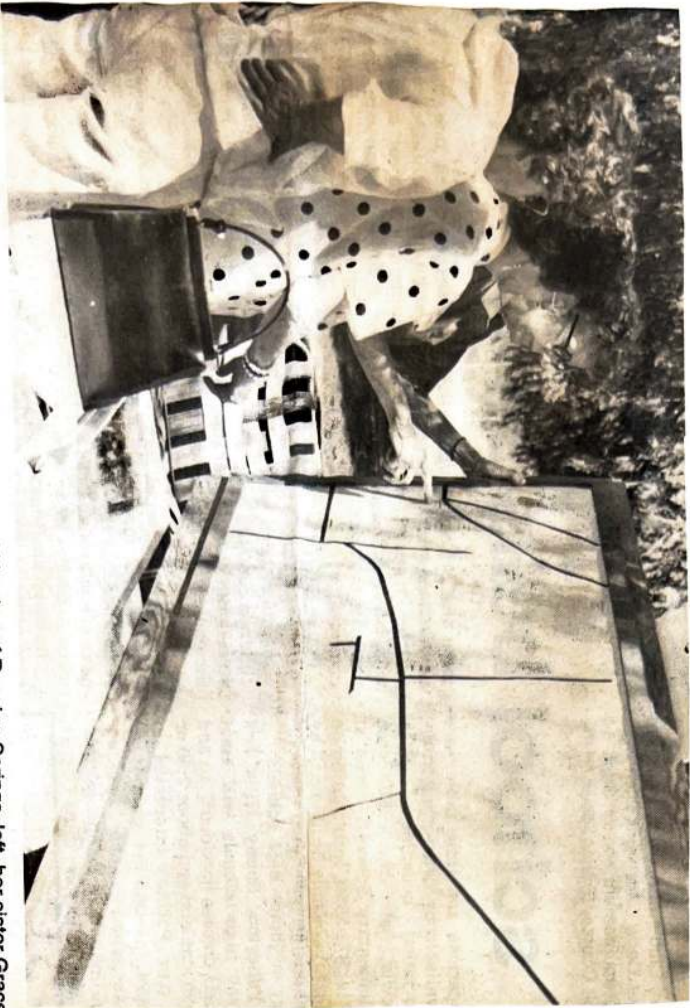
**FOND MEMORIES** — Memorabilia including team photographs of oil lease baseball squads and Brea-Olinda High School yearbooks

were just some of the items picnic-goers reminisced over during the Olinda Old Timers Picnic on Sunday.

# Old Timer's Picnic spotlights fond memories

Fri. Sept. 6, 1985

Daily Star-Progress



**OLD ADDRESSES** — On a large map, Juanita Paschal Horning of Running Springs, left, her sister Grace Paschal Miner of Bellflower and Emma Johnson Bannie, of Anaheim, locate the lots which used to be called home in the east Brea area.



**TESTING ONE, TWO, THREE** — Wearing the Old Timer's "official" green and gold hat is Willie Schubert of Anaheim. He is testing a public address system for use at the group's annual picnic with his brother Fred Schubert of Sacramento. The men are still affectionately known as "the Schubert boys" by a group of friends who all share a part of their pasts. Either they, or their spouses used to live in the opening of Brea's Carbon Canyon on land now used for either the Carbon Canyon Regional Park or oil production.



**LUNCH IN THE SHADE** — The annual Old Timer's Picnic was held Saturday in the shade of trees that used to cover homes of longtime Brea residents. A potluck picnic was preceded by reunions and shared memories. Returning to a site near his former home was Fred Schubert and his wife Norma who traveled south from Sacramento with their chihuahuas Tico for the afternoon's festivities.



**A PRECIOUS SPOT** — Ella Armstrong Post stands near three remaining trees left of 12 her father Milton planted around 1923. The Old Timer's Picnic was held in the Armstrong Grove at Carbon Canyon Regional Park, named after Ella's brother, the late Major Jack Armstrong, former fighter pilot. Ella remembers days before canyon development when her brothers would bring home rabbits from the surrounding hills to be soaked all night in salt water for a rabbit breakfast.



**SETTING UP** — Sarah Collings Russell, now of Sacramento, slices into zucchini bread preparing for lunch. The outdoor feast also included homemade applesauce.



*Mabel Brown, 97, looks through an album.*

BREA — In a wood frame house on an Olinde hill, Toos Brodent was born so small that her first bed was a shoebox.

"I weighed 2 1/2 pounds and I was two months premature," recalled Brodent, now a healthy 63. "After the shoebox, my bed was a dresser drawer until my Grandpa Brown made me a crib."

Because her mother died during the childbirth, Brodent was raised by her grandparents, who lived on the Olinde oil leases.

During her childhood, Brodent met many of the former area residents who gathered Saturday to share chicken, cake, and recollections at Carson Canyon Park, land which formerly was the site of the Olinde School, east of Brea.

Now it's a busy suburban park: well-mowed grass, irrigated trees, playgrounds, paths . . . no school.

# Fond Memories of Oil Boom Brea

Fond

Memories

of

Oil Boom Brea

At Saturday's picnic, Brodent recalled her tomboyish youth. "I used to throw dirt clods at Schubert's sheeps because he was gonna lock me in the closet because I was so ornery," she said. "I hit Paul Ledbetter over the head with my lunchbox because he was always teasing me. I was a tomboy and how."

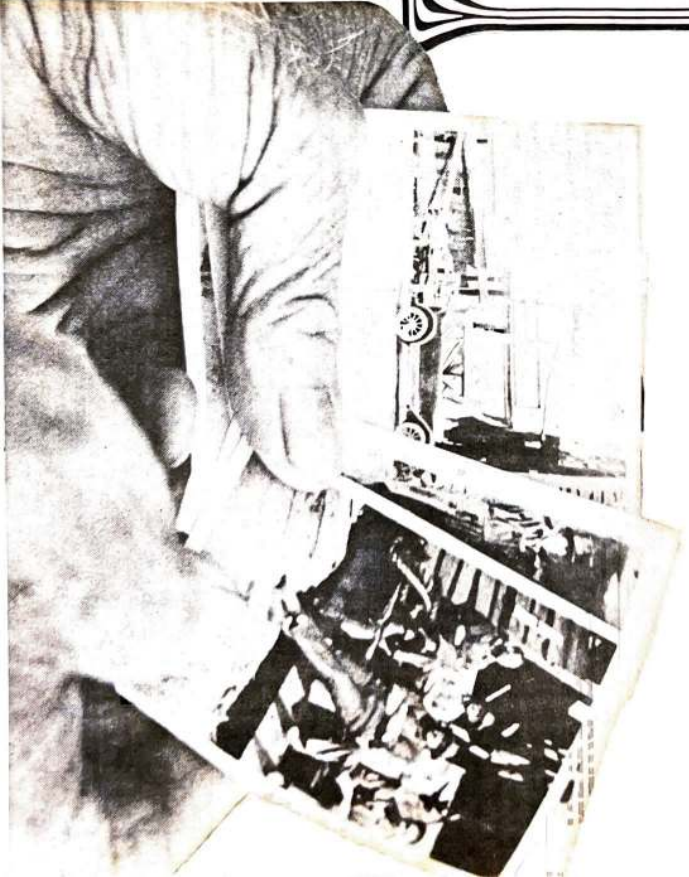
"When I was about 9, I turned the boys' clubhouse on the top of the hill into the girls' clubhouse. I broke the door down with a broom and got them out. I had the boys all scared of me."

"When I was 12, my grandmother got cancer and I moved to my aunt's house in Huntington Park. But I never lost contact with the Schuberts."

One of her Schubert playmates was Frieda Schubert Smith, now 61, who lived on the oil leases land for nearly 30 years until 1951 when she moved with her new husband to Yorba Linda.

"A number of different oil companies had leases in this valley," explained Smith, whose father was an oil pumpjack. "On their leases the companies built houses for families of their employees and bunkhouses for their single men. Most of the houses were rented and a few were purchased."

"There was a school here, a social hall, a barber shop, general store and churches. The houses and buildings were gradually moved off or moved down as the workers were transferred to other producing oilfields. It was all gone by the early 1960s."



*Swapsheets grow more precious with the years.*



*John Willbur, 79, recalls his youth.*

And what were Smith's fondest memories? "What the boys did on Halloween," she answered. "They'd dump over the outhouses and run two-wheel trailers down the hills."

Joyce Fitzgerald, 54, of Orange, remembered sliding down the wet, slick grass of those hills on sheets of corrugated tin. During visits to her grandparents Oscar and Mabel Corn, Fitzgerald also swam in a reservoir, filled jars with polliwogs and went out in the backyard to look at goats, chickens and a rooster known for its temper tantrums.

As she described those days, Fitzgerald sat next to her grandmother, who at age 97, was the oldest person in attendance at the picnic.

Twenty years younger at 79, John Willbur was reminded of the times he raided the gas traps.

Gasoline was condensed in the pipes of the gas traps," said Smith. "So the men would filter this gasoline through old felt hats so they could use it in their jalopies."

Like Willbur, Harold Van Patten's father was also a pumper. "I lived here from 1923 until 1929, but then I continued at Olinda School until 1936 when I graduated," said bushy-bearded Van Patten, 57, of Yorba Linda.



*Nellie Redbetter, left, reminisces with an old friend.*

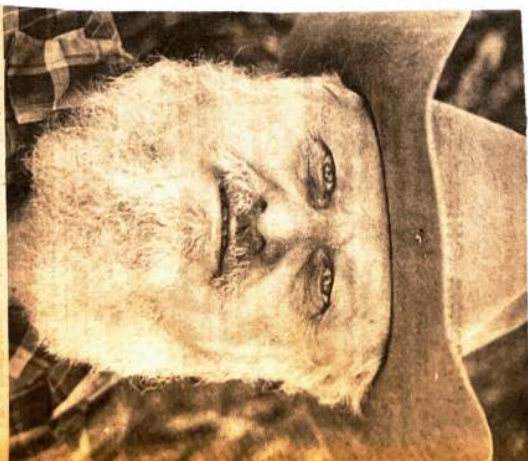
"We used to go out at recess to the creek bed behind the school and catch horned toads. I remember the day about 1935 or '36 when the general store caught fire and all of us kids ran from school to watch. It happened at lunch and the teachers couldn't hold us back, so school was out for the day."

"I'll never forget the time this one kid swiped a bologna sandwich out of another kid's lunch. He wiped the bologna on the school bell rope and tore up the sandwich and threw it out in front of the school. He left the door open and then he and I ran back to the classroom."

"A dog followed the pieces of sandwich into the school and grabbed the end of the bell rope and started pulling. The bell rang and everybody assumed it was a fire drill and marched out."

Frances Greeninger Riggins' memories are a bit more pastoral: "I remember hiking all over these hills picking wildflowers and mushrooms, and playing baseball in the street."

Riggins was born in her parents' oil lease house. So was her own daughter, Gerry, now 40, who lived



*Harold Van Patten remembers.*

in the area her first two years. "I remember tarantulas and the red ants," she recalled. "I remember a tarantula walking across the street, and I remember when I sat on an ant hill. You don't forget those things."

Despite the tarantulas and ants and overturned outhouses, the picnickers all smiled at the memories they share of their life on the Olinda oil leases.

Looking at the undeveloped hills where decades ago she traced her gangly tomboy legs, Broden smiled and said, "Here were the happiest days of my life."

# OLINDA 29TH ANNUAL PICNIC

## Olinda Reunion

By Susan Gaede

Former residents of Olinda held their 29th annual picnic recently in Carbon Canyon Regional Park. Many old-timers enjoyed a day of reminiscing.

The all-day event took place at Jack Armstrong's Grove, named after the famed Army pilot who died during an attempt to set an air speed record. Armstrong's son, Jack Armstrong Jr., visiting from Texas, and the pilot's sister, Ella Armstrong Post, attended at the reunion.

Arthur Hansen, professor at Cal State Fullerton, introduced the seven people who lived, worked, played and attended school in Olinda interviewed for the book "Pipelines to the Past" compiled by his oral history class. The book is dedicated to the memory of Ted Craig, Mr. Speaker, who died August 3 this year.

Merle Van Ness Hale, Lois Muzzall Smith, Emma Johnson Bennie, Jack Gaudin, Jessie Isbell, Harold Van Patten, and Ella Armstrong were introduced at the picnic and given a free book since they were interviewed and gave a good idea of what it was like to live and grow up in Olinda centered around the oil industry.

Books were sold to the rest of the visitors for \$5 and almost everyone at the picnic purchased one. Many of the pioneers had their friends at the picnic autograph their book. Frieda Schubert Smith was chairman of the reunion.



Views scrapbook--Joyce Milton Armstrong, Frieda Schubert Smith (Chairperson of picnic) Juanita and John Wilbur go through old memories



Another reunion--Louise (Cullen) Bleininger and Lois Muzzall Smith, class of '20



Donna Payne Henderson, Patty Early, John Wilbur, Jack Gaudin and Ella Armstrong Post reminisce.

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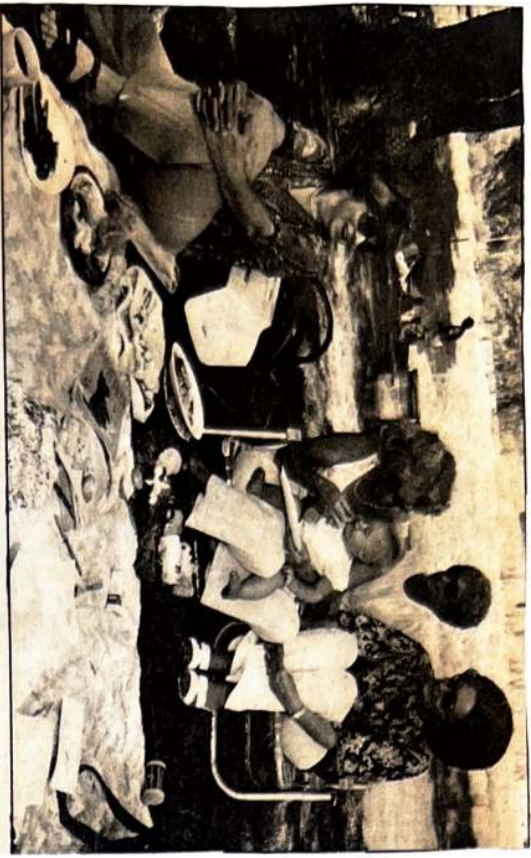
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Another reunion--Louise (Cullen) Bleiningger and Lois Muzzall Smith, class of '20



Donna Payne Henderson, Patty Early, John Wilbur,



The former-Neal sisters lavish attention on Jessica Etter



Cyprie Carmen and Pat Ledbetter share a hug.



Katherine Collins takes time out to glance through "Pipelines to the Past"

# 'Olinda Kids' To Reminisce At Picnic

By JIM MARXEN  
DSP Staff Writer

**BREA** — For the past three years as the month of August begins to wane, a large and lively crowd of people gathers in the Jack Armstrong Grove at Carbon Canyon Regional Park.

Those in the group numbering over 200, are not your ordinary, everyday picnickers, however. In fact many of those present know the surrounding canyon like the back of their hands.

This comes as no surprise, of course, when one realizes that those present are the "Olinda Kids," former residents of the now-vanished oil town.

The group will meet in the grove beginning at 10 a.m. Saturday with festivities expected to last well into the evening. The day will be special for everyone who attends including Frieda Smith who now makes her home in Yorba Linda and is handling publicity for this year's event.

Smith feels the community spirit which developed in Olinda is perhaps the biggest reason why the Oldtimers picnic has become successful.

"We all are able to keep in contact because we're still close to

one another."

Smith has a glimmer in her eye and a slight smile on her lips as she talks about her 40 years in Olinda and the people who made their home there.

The town itself was founded before the turn of the century at the mouth of Carbon Canyon. The "Old Green Schoolhouse," part of which is still being used as Brea's community center, was located along the edge of what is now Carbon Canyon Regional Park.

Little is left to remind passers-by of the town, but Smith feels the canyon still echos with memories of the Olinda days.

"I came there in 1922. My father worked in the fields for 40 years and I had all my schooling there . . . we had 200 kids in the school in those days."

Her memories of school were brightened recently when she learned her former principal was still alive and living in the town of Tipton.

The woman, Gladys Cooper, was relatively young when she supervised the budding school. She left after seven years to work in the Nazarene Church and later settled on the Tipton ranch where



By Jess Anderson Jr./News Tribune

Olinda natives Juanita Horring, Frances Greemyer, Dorothy Burns, Helen Zimke and Homer Allen.



Frieda Smith

# 'Olinda Kids' To Reminisce...

She wrote her autobiography. It was in Tipton that Smith and good friend Ella Armstrong -

Post visited her recently. The visit, Smith recalls, brought to mind several memories.

"She was a very dedicated principal," Smith says. "I saw her only a few times in those days, but I remember she was strict. She used to play the piano for us."

Perhaps the biggest hero of the day was Jack Armstrong who made his name as a pilot in World War II. Armstrong was truly the "All American Boy." Smith remembers, who had a friendly attitude and memorable singing voice.

Armstrong broke an air speed record following the war but was killed trying to better that record at an airshow in Ohio.

Smith feels the close contact between former Olinda residents retains part of the original community atmosphere of the town.

"I still see at least five people who used to live next to us. Our own house was purchased from the parents of Walter Johnson, the famous

baseball player."

Baseball was one of the major pastimes for residents of Olinda. Most of the games were organized by Bob Isbell, an office worker for the oil companies whose wife still lives in Brea. Social activities were often organized by Ernie Scribner, a Bible student who directed church services on Sunday.

Christmas time in Olinda was a special time for residents. Smith remembers. "The supervisors remembered everyone on Christmas and everyone got a turkey. Santa Claus used to come right up the street to see all the kids."

Other social activities included trips to Anaheim. "We used to get ice cream and hamburgers there. Someone would get their parent's car and we'd pile in and drive down. Sometimes we'd go to a show there."

Olinda restaurants would also take advantage of nearby La Vida Hot Springs. "If you had the money," Smith says, "you'd go up there into the hot baths for a day. They had a hotel and a restaurant where my

brother got his first job."

Smith also remembers Mr. Teagle, who ran the grocery store in Olinda. "He had everything from clothing to hardware. I remember one pound of pork chops used to cost 25 cents. I once bought a dress there for \$1.88 and shoes were \$2 a pair. I think he had bread for 11 cents a loaf."

"Mr. Teagle was very good to people if they couldn't pay. . . . It was the Depression then, and he'd let them have a credit account if they didn't have enough money."

The Olinda picnic began after the dedication of Carbon Canyon Regional Park. Smith says the gathering sparks many conversations simply on the basis of an old photograph.

"Everyone brings their old photos and everyone has a story about what happened to almost everyone in the picture."

"First you've got to find out if anyone recognizes you and then they usually say, 'You look like your mother did back then.'"

"This year we're going to have name tags

to make it easier. Before you know it, everyone will know everyone else at the picnic."

Smith explains it is often a person's voice that sparks a memory.

"The voice is often the easiest way to recognize a person. I think the men undergo more physical

change than the women. But their voices are the same.

"There's going to be a lot of eating and talking and picture showing," she says of the upcoming gathering.

"Who knows what time it's going to break up . . ."